Pacific Islands Fishery News

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Council Votes for Purse Seine Area Closures

From left: Purse seiner in Pago Pago Harbor, American Samoa. Taiwanese purse seiner transhipping in Majuro, Marshall Islands (Photo courtesy of David Itano). Korean purse seiners docked at Apra Harbor, Guam.

AT ITS 141ST MEETING on April 14, 2008, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council recommended prohibiting purse seine fishing in all US exclusive economic zone (EEZ) waters surrounding Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and implementing a 75-nautical-mile purse seine exclusion zone around the islands of American Samoa. No purse seine area closure was recommended for the Hawaii Archipelago as it is too far north of the equatorial fishing grounds where the purse seine fleets typically operate. US vessels would continue to have exclusive rights to purse seine in US EEZ waters around Kingman Reef; the atolls of Johnston and Palmyra; and the islands of Howland, Baker, Jarvis and Wake, which are collectively known as the US Pacific remote island areas (PRIAs). Recommendations made by the Council are transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce for approval.

The Council's decision reflects its concern that new vessels are entering the US purse seine fleet at a time when the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission is considering increased restrictions on purse seine fisheries due to overcapacity. Consequently, the US fleet may find the US EEZ waters more attractive. Fishing by the US purse seine fleet in the US EEZ surrounding the Pacific islands has been focused primarily on the waters around Howland and Baker and to a limited extent around American Samoa. However, Guam and CNMI are just north of an area fished intensively by purse seine vessels in some years. If the US purse seiners move into these EEZ waters, they may compete with the small, local troll vessels as both target skipjack and yellowfin tuna.

Highest Annual Skipjack Catches in EEZ around American Samoa:

Purse seine:
1,980,000 lbs (1991)

Longline:
538,386 lbs (2002)

Troll:
167,998 lbs (1995)

Besides US EEZ waters and the high seas, the US fleet in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean has purse seined in EEZ waters of independent Pacific Island countries under the South Pacific Tuna Treaty since 1988. The treaty provides the US fleet with 40 permits at an annual cost of approximately $18 million in federal dollars regardless of the number of permits issued and about $3 million payed by industry.

During this time, the fleet size has fluctuated. From 1998 to 2006, it declined to about a dozen vessels. However, in the past two years it has grown steadily due to an influx of new US-Taiwan joint venture purse seine vessels built in Taiwan but primarily (51 percent) owned by US companies and operated under US skippers. Currently the fleet includes 26 vessels. More are expected to join during the remainder of 2008 and 2009.

Currently foreign-built US flagged fishing vessels over 200 tons are prohibited from fishing within the US EEZ around American Samoa, Guam and CNMI. However, Congressional legislation has been introduced that would allow these vessels to fish in EEZ waters surrounding American Samoa, Guam, CNMI and the PRIAs. During the 142nd Council meeting in June 2008, Council members from American Samoa expressed concern because these new purse-seiners may claim American Samoa as their homeport, but they provision, fuel and transship fish at other ports and thus provide no benefits to the territory.

PIFSC LIBRARY

Council Moves to Manage FADs as Fishing Gear

Drifting FADs piled on the deck of a purse seiner prior to deployment. Photo courtesy of David Itano

At its 142nd meeting in June 2008, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council took initial action on managing fish aggregation devices (FADs) as fishing gear. The Council chose preliminarily a) to classify as FADs all floating objects within US exclusive economic zone (EEZ) waters of the Western Pacific Region that have been purposefully deployed, enhanced or instrumented with the intent of aggregating fish and b) to require that FADs be marked with the owner's name and vessel identification and be registered with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

The Council's action acknowledges the benefits of FADs to troll, handline and other small-scale fisheries while addressing concerns about the increased use of FADs by purse seine operations. Purse-seine FADs aggregate not only targeted skipjack tuna for canning but also a range of incidental species, including juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna. Pacific bigeye tuna is currently in a state of overfishing due to expansion of purse seine fishing throughout the Pacific. In the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the stock may be approaching an overfished condition. FAD associated purse seine fishing has also contributed to yellowfin tuna approaching an overfishing condition.

Purse seine FADs are comprised of a surface or sub-surface float, usually a raft, from which netting or ropes are suspended to provide substrate and cover for small fish, which then aggregate larger predators such as tuna. FADs may be tethered to a mooring or deployed as free floating aggregators with a radio beacon or GPS unit to locate them. They may also be equipped with a sonar that supplies information on the volume of fish that has accumulated.

This FAD was discovered in May 2008 illegally tied to an oceanographic buoy. Photo courtesy of David Itano

Prior to 1996, purse seine fishing in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) was conducted almost entirely on free swimming schools of skipjack and yellowfin tuna. After 1996, more FAD associated sets became prevalent in the US fleet. FAD associated sets rose to about 90 percent of all sets by 1999. Although this declined sharply in the following years, FAD associated sets once again accounting for about 80 percent of all sets made by the US fleet by 2006. Other distant water purse seine fleets in the WCPO fish predominantly on unassociated schools, but some domestic fleets, such as Papua New Guinea, make about 70 percent of their sets on FAD associated schools.

At its 143rd meeting, October 14-17, 2008 in Honolulu, the Council will consider limiting all FAD-associated purse-seine fishing in the US EEZ of the Western Pacific to registered FADs or restricting the use of FAD sets by purse seiners in US EEZ waters around American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and Hawaii.

Honolulu Ranks 6th Most Valued US Fishing Port

US commercial fishermen in 2006-2007 landed 9.2 billion pounds of seafood, valued at $4.1 billion. The port of Honolulu ranked sixth for value of landings, with $64.3 million. The data on the nation's ports is part of Fisheries of the United States 2007, which can be found at www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/index.html

Council Votes to Lift Effort Limit for Swordfish

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, at its 142nd meeting in June 2008, recommended removing the annual effort limit and associated shallow-set certificate program for the Hawaii shallow-set longline fishery for swordfish. These and a suite of other measures were implemented in 2004 to address concerns about the fishery's interactions with sea turtles. Since that time, the fishery has seen an 89 percent reduction in its sea turtle interaction rate.

Swordfish landings at the Honolulu fish auction.

The Council also recommended setting annual loggerhead and leatherback interaction hard caps of 46 and 19, respectively. It is believed that less than one-quarter of all interactions result in turtle mortality. The fishery would close for the year when either of the hard caps is reached. Current regulations regarding 100 percent observer coverage and required use of circle hooks and mackerel bait, as well as other regulatory measures, would remain in place.

A draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement has been prepared and will be available for public review by mid-August 2008. The National Marine Fisheries Service is preparing a biological opinion pursuant to the Endangered Species Act, which is scheduled to be completed by the October 2008 Council meeting.

Tuna Roundtable Focuses on RFMOs, Eco-labeling

TUNA FISHING COMPANIES recognize that the future of their businesses rely on the success of regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs), such as the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission. However, consensus-based decision-making has often prevented RFMOs from adopting legally binding measures to curb the growth of tuna fleets, decrease fisheries-related tuna mortality and address bycatch. Low compliance with RFMO measures exacerbates the problem.

Representatives from key industry and government groups involved in the harvesting, processing, distribution, sales and management of tuna addressed these and other tuna issues on April 21, 2008, in Brussels, at the inaugural Sustainable Tuna Roundtable. The participants agreed that keeping the fishery sustainable will require increased industry participation in RFMOs to push for the implementation of RFMO scientific committee recommendations and ensure compliance with them.

Discussion at the event also focused on the use of market-driven incentives to support sustainable tuna fisheries. A key agreement was to improve communication to consumers on progress in the sustainability of tuna fisheries and the basis for tuna sourcing decisions. The participants recognized that many assessment, certification and eco-labeling programs for commercial tuna fisheries already exist and noted that improvements could be made to them. Their accuracy and scientific rigor, such as accounting for trends and forecasting, could be ameliorated by better communicating fishery data to those conducting the assessments.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) *Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries* was agreed to be an appropriate starting point as a global, single set of standards against which to assess the sustainability of individual fisheries. Likewise, the FAO *Guidelines for the Eco-labeling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries* were recognized as providing requisite guidance for the institutional and procedural arrangements for awarding and maintaining an eco-label and identifying the minimum substantive requirements for eco-labels.

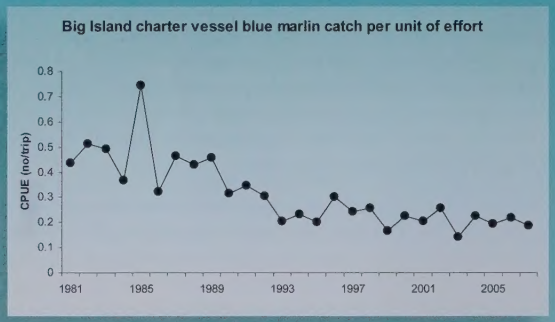
Roundtable co-hosts, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, will continue to facilitate communication between the retail and tuna fishing industries to improve the scientific basis for seafood sourcing policies and achieve sustainable tuna fisheries.

Roundtable sponsors included the Sea Fish Industry Authority, Royal Caribbean International and the Hawaii Longline Association. Additional participants included **FISHING INDUSTRY:** Luen Thai Fishing Venture Ltd., National Fisheries Institute, Organización de Profesional de Grandes Atuneros Congeladores, Pacific Islands Industry Tuna Association, Western Fishboat Owners Association, World Tuna Purse Seine Organization and Organisation Des Producteurs de Thon Congele; **SEAFOOD INDUSTRY:** Lidl Stiftung & Company KG, Migros (MICARNA SA), Tesco Stores Ltd., Whole Foods Market, Connors Bros., Atuna, New England Seafood International Ltd., Seachill, MW Brands, and Maldive Marine Products, and **INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND RFMOS:** UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, and Standards Norway.

For a copy of the meeting report, please go to **www.wpcouncil.org/pelagic.htm** or contact Paul Dalzell at **paul.dalzell@noaa.gov**.

New Control Date Set for Hawaii Charter Fishery

At the 142nd meeting June 2008 in Honolulu, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council recommended establishing a new control date of June 19, 2008, for the Hawaii-based pelagic charter fishery. The new date came into effect on July 22, 2008, and supersedes the March 16, 2007, control date that was established in 2007.



Control dates are established to notify the public that participants entering a particular fishery after the control date are not guaranteed future participation in the fishery. The control date does not commit the Council or the National Marine Fisheries Service to any particular management regime or criteria, and fishermen are not guaranteed future participation in the fishery, regardless of their level of participation before or after the control date.

The Council has not yet recommended limiting new entry or imposing any other management measures in this fishery. However, it is concerned about State of Hawaii fishery data indicating that blue marlin *(Makaira nigricans)* catch per unit effort from Kona-based pelagic charter fishing has declined significantly over the past 20 years. Similar trends are also apparent for pelagic charter fishing data from the other Hawaiian Islands.

Additionally, proposed expansion of Honokohau Harbor on the Kona coast of the Big Island and the construction of Hoakalei Marina on the Ewa coast of Oahu could lead to a growth in the Hawaii-based pelagic charter fishery and significantly impact billfish and other pelagic fishes. The Kona Coast is a major spawning and nursery ground for blue marlin, spearfish and swordfish.

Hoakalei Marina will encompass more than 53 acres upon completion and is envisioned to have 600 to 800 slips to accommodate a range of boat sizes. A seven-lane boat launch ramp facility and trailer parking are also planned. According to Haseko spokesperson Chris Parsons, "Haseko at this time has not designated any slips for commercial charter boats." For more details, go to **www.haseko.com** or **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hoakalei_Resort**.

Hoakalei Marina as of June 2008. Photo courtesy of Haseko.

Pelagic charter fishing in Hawaii is a commercial fishery because a portion of the catch is typically sold. Charter fishermen must have a State of Hawaii commercial marine license for their vessel and report their catches. In 2007, the charter vessels reported taking 8,797 trips or an average of 68.2 trips per vessel. The reported 2007 catch by the fishery was 475,156 pounds. The State of Hawaii issued 128 pelagic charter licenses in 2008.

Hawaii Handline Management Program Advances

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council has been working the past year to develop management programs for all offshore, non-longline pelagic fisheries (NLPF) in the Western Pacific Region (e.g., troll, handline, short-line and pole-and-line). There are two principal reasons for considering this action.

First, fishers and the general public have expressed concern about juvenile bigeye catches by offshore NLPF fisheries, especially on the Cross Seamount and NOAA weather buoys, and their potential impact on fisheries for bigeye closer to shore.

Second, the 2006 reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act directs the Council to establish annual catch limits (ACLs) and accountability measures for stocks subject to overfishing by 2010 and for all stocks by 2011.

Juvenile yellowfin and bigeye tuna are hard to distinguish. The status of both stocks in the Pacific is leading to increased local and regional management measures, including for offshore, non-longline pelagic fisheries (NLPF) in the Western Pacific Region. Photo courtesy of David Itano

The initial NLPF program the Council is considering is a limited entry program for the Hawaii offshore commercial pelagic fishery employing handlines and related (non-trolling) hook-and-line gear (e.g., shortlines, vertical longline) off or around Cross Seamount, NOAA weather buoys and private fish aggregating devices. The draft amendment to the Pelagics Fishery Management Plan for the Western Pacific Region was reviewed by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) in March 2008. Public scoping meetings were held in late May 2008 at Hilo, Kona and Honolulu. At its 142nd meeting in June 2008, the Council reviewed the SSC and public comments and directed its staff to incorporate eligibility criteria, gear descriptions, area of application, associated impacts and other details in an analysis of a range of alternatives to establish the limited entry program.

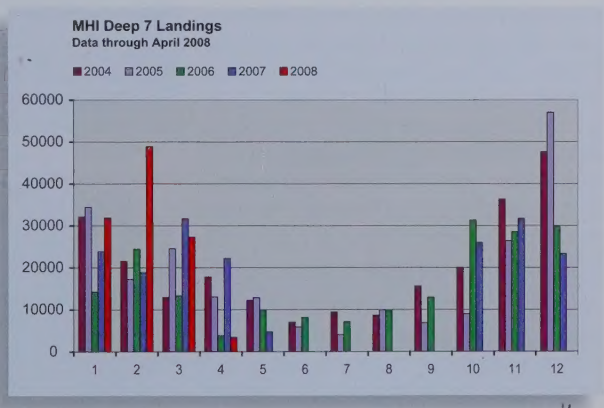
Council staff will continue to obtain further information and perspectives from the public and handline fishers as it prepares the analysis, which the Council will review when it convenes October 2008 in Honolulu. Public meetings in Lihue, Kauai, and Hana and Wailuku, Maui, are tentatively scheduled for the week of Sept. 22, 2008.

MHI Bottomfish Fishery Closes for Seven Months

In 2007, State of Hawaii and federal fishery managers began implementing a joint two-phased program to end overfishing of Hawaii bottomfish. The first phase was the first ever seasonal closure for seven deepwater bottomfish species (onaga, ehu, gindai, hapuupuu, lehi, opakapaka and kalekale) in the main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) in both State and federal waters. The closure took place May 15 to Sept. 31, 2007, and was applied to both the commercial and non-commercial sectors.

The second phase of the program began Oct. 1, 2007, with the fishery reopening under a suite of new management measures, including a total allowable catch (TAC) of 178,000 pounds of the deepwater species. Both sectors of the fishery in State and federal waters were subject to being closed if the TAC was reached by the commercial sector (the only sector currently required to report catches) before May 1, 2008, when the fishery's second seasonal closure was scheduled to begin. The TAC was enforced through stepped up monitoring by the Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Bad weather during December 2007 resulted in lower than average catches. Then a month-long stretch of unusually calm weather during February and early March 2008 resulted in a spike of bottomfish landings. The TAC was reached before the scheduled end of the season, and the fishery was closed on April 16, 2008.



Implementation of the second phase will continue with several additional new measures when the fishery reopens. The reopening was initially scheduled for Sept. 1, 2008. However, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council at its 142nd meeting in June 2008 recommended delaying the opening to Nov. 15, 2008. The extension is needed to allow the NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) time to update the stock assessment to include 2005 through 2007 catch data for the fishery and then use the data to analyze the potential risk of overfishing at different catch levels.

The Council also recommended that the PIFSC risk assessment model incorporate data from both the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) and the MHI and account for the reduced effort by the NWHI bottomfish fishery over the next few years as well as the permanent closure of the NWHI fishery in 2011 as a result of President George W. Bush's executive order creating the NWHI marine national monument. The Council and its Scientific and Statistical Committee are scheduled to review the new stock assessment and risk analysis in October.

Besides the TAC, the fishery will reopen with new permit and reporting requirements and bag limits for the non-commercial bottomfish sector. These new rules were published in the Federal Register on April 14, 2008, and can be found along with a compliance guide at www.hawaiibottomfish.info.

The Council and NMFS hosted a series of workshops throughout Hawaii in July and August 2008 to provide training on how to apply for a non-commercial permit, complete a reporting log, use the "dropshot" weight to release embolized bottomfish, use handheld GPS units to aid in position reporting and comply with other new MHI bottomfish fishery rules.

Forum Seeks Support for Small-Scale Fisheries

In June 2008, the Council held a Fishers Forum in Honolulu, Hawaii, to discuss the impacts of rising fuel and other costs to small-scale and traditional fisheries and to explore possible Council action to improve the situation, such as reduced permit fees, the use of multi-year fishing permits (instead of the annual permits now in use), simplified catch-reporting systems and limited fishing allowances in otherwise closed areas or seasons.

The June 2008 Fishers Forum focused on potential management actions to help small-scale and traditional fishermen who face increased fishing costs. Pictured is a Molokai aku boat.

As a first step, the Council is considering specific definitions for small-scale and/or traditional fisheries. Criteria may include vessel length, annual catch, percent of catch sold, percent of catch kept for family use, years fishing and whether someone is fishing in a "traditional" fishery (yet to be defined). The Council's Social Science Research Planning Committee convenes Oct. 13, 2008, in Honolulu to discuss this issue. Once the fisheries are defined, the Council can consider the implementation of measures to support them.

American Samoa
Longline Program to Reopen

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, at its 141st meeting in Honolulu on April 14, 2008, recommended that the permit process for all vessel size classes under the American Samoa longline limited entry program be reopened for one year using existing criteria (historical participation in the fishery). A number of factors led to the decision, including reports that only 36 of the 60 permitted vessels reported fishing in 2006 and only 28 reported fishing in the first half of 2007. Only one alia (small, catamaran-type) vessel was included in the 2007 report. American Samoans stood to lose a substantial number of permits should the declining trend continue through 2008, when the three-year landing period for renewal of the initial permits ends.

American Samoa longline limited entry fishermen are required to land over three consecutive calendar years (beginning with the year after the permit was issued in the name of the current permit holder), a total of at least 1,000 pounds of pelagic species for vessels less than 50-feet in length and 5,000 pounds of pelagic species for vessels over 50-feet in length.

In June 2006, NMFS Permit Coordinator Walter Ikehara identified several potential reasons for the declining participation: increase in fuel and other operational costs, decrease in albacore catch rates, location of albacore schools farther from port thus putting smaller vessels at a disadvantage, prohibition of canneries from accepting or receiving pelagic fish with a core temperature higher than 40° F and declining revenues of longline fishery possibly causing many to switch to bottomfishing or leave fishing for other employment.

The existing American Samoa longline measures were developed earlier this decade in response to the rapid growth of the American Samoa pelagic longline fishery. In 2002, the active longline fleet increased from 21 mostly alia vessels to 75 vessels of a variety of sizes. The small vessels were mostly owned by American Samoans, while the larger vessels were mostly owned by non-American Samoans. To minimize conflicts between the vessel types, regulations were implemented prohibiting vessels over 50-feet in length from operating within 50 nautical miles area of the islands.

The limited entry system was implemented in 2005 to stabilize the growth of the fishery and to ensure continued participation by American Samoan fishermen. During development of the program, an estimated 130 longline fishermen in American Samoa were eligible for a limited entry permit from the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Pago Pago harbor crowded with local alia longline vessels earlier this decade. Photos courtesy of Dave Hamm.

Measures Set for CNMI Longline Fishery

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council has recently taken action in response to the emergence of a fledgling longline fishery in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The National Marine Fisheries Service has issued two longline permits to Crystal Seas Cnmi Inc., which has shore-side facilities to blast freeze and vacuum pack products.

At its 141st meeting on April 14, 2008, in Honolulu, the Council recommended that a CNMI longline exclusion zone be established out to 30 nautical miles from shore, and, during its 142nd meeting, it recommended that a control date of June 19, 2008, be set for the CNMI-based longline fishery. The control date may be used in the future to limit further entry of longline vessels to fish around the US exclusive economic zone (EEZ) waters surrounding the CNMI. Establishment of the control date does not commit the Council to any particular management regime or criteria for entry into the longline fishery, and fishery participants are not guaranteed future participation in the fisheries, regardless of their level of participation before or after the control date. The control date became effective July 23, 2008. The 30-nm exclusion zone recommendation will be transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce for approval.

Should the longline fishery develop in CNMI, it could conflict with the local pelagic fishery, which primarily trolls using vessels that are typically less than 24 feet in length. Fishing on these small vessels is limited to one-day trips in waters within about 20 miles from shore, where abundant skipjack tuna is found among the reefs and banks.

The Council's actions for the CNMI longline fishery are similar to those taken for Hawaii and American Samoa longline fisheries when they began to develop. In both cases, the development was quite rapid. The Hawaii longline fleet doubled from 50 vessels in 1988 to 100 vessels in 1990, with landings increasing from approximately 6.7 million pounds to about 14.8 million pounds. The American Samoa fleet tripled in size from about 20 vessels to nearly 70 vessels between 1999 and 2001, with catches soaring from less than 50,000 fish to over 200,000 pieces. The area closure and limited entry programs that were implemented allowed the longline fisheries to develop while preventing potential conflicts with the smaller-scale local fisheries and avoiding possible localized stock depletion.

CNMI longline vessels at port in Saipan. The Council recommends a longline closed area out to 30 miles from shore. A June 19, 2008 control date that could be used to establish a limited entry program for the fishery in the future if warranted became effective on July 23, 2008.

Council, NMFS Tackle American Samoa Sea Turtle Issue

In response to concerns about fishery interactions with green sea turtles around American Samoa, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council at its 142nd meeting, in Honolulu in June 2008, directed its staff to work with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

16/0 or larger circle hooks (center) with <10-degree offset has proved to be one effective method for mitigating sea turtle interactions with longline fisheries.

Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center to analyze a range of alternatives for mitigating sea turtle interactions with the American Samoa longline fishery. The Council also recommended that NMFS immediately undertake cooperative research around American Samoa regarding potential measures to cost-effectively reduce longline-sea turtle interactions.

Mitigation methods to be analyzed include using 45-gram or heavier weights within 1 meter of each hook, longer float lines, the largest practical whole fish bait, and 16/0 or larger circle hooks with <10-degree offset; setting hooks at least 100 meters deep; and moving hooks away from floats. Each of these methods has shown positive results either in the Hawaii longline fishery or during fishery research projects. Some are designed to keep baited hooks deep in the water column where turtles are rarely encountered, while others make baited hooks more difficult for turtles to ingest or swallow. During public meetings in American Samoa in July 2008, longline fishermen favored the removal of the the two hooks nearest to the floats.

The Council will consider the alternatives when it meets October 14 to 17, 2008, in Honolulu.

Council Assists in Reviving Traditional Chenchulu Fishing

In the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the traditional talaya (throw or cast net) is allowed but other traditional net fishing practices have been banned for many years. These include chenchulun and lagua (drag net or beach seine), chenchulun managam (trap net), chenchulun umesugon (surround net) and tekkeng (gill net). The chenchulun umesugon method requires many individuals to deploy a net into the water to form a circle and to chase the fish into the net before the circle is closed. Fish in the net bury themselves in the sand or take refuge under the coral until they are caught by spear. Since the chenchulu ban, community fishing involving many individuals has been replaced by individual fishing and the sense of group effort and the sharing of catches among the participants began to disappear.

Chenchulu master fisherman Jesus "Seven" Sablan.

But this situation is likely to change again. During the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's Marianas Archipelago Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committee meeting two years ago, a representative from the Tanapag fishing village in Saipan requested assistance in reviving the traditional chenchulu umesugon fishing practice. In February 2007, Council staff met with the leaders of the Tanapag community who were interested in using this method to catch rabbitfish and bigeye scad during their seasonal runs from April to May and August to November, respectively. The village chief offered his place by the beach to serve as a community demonstration project site. A long-time fishermen committed the use of his chenchulun net (the only known one in the village) for the project and agreed to serve as the instructor and master fisherman, including monitoring the rabbitfish or bigeye scad during their seasonal runs.

The fishing community subsequently worked with the CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources (DLNR) and its Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to implement a special exemption to enable communities to use this traditional practice in association with a village fiesta, celebration or community harvest. The government is allowing use of the banned fishing practices to preserve cultural traditions and contribute to village and community cohesion. The exemption allows the deploying of the net during daylight hours of a certain day and sets the amount of fish, by weight, to be harvested. DFW enforcement is on the scene to monitor the activity.

On March 9, 2008, the Tanapag fishing community treated Council staff and visiting traditional fishing practitioners from Hawaii to a demonstration of chenchulun umesugon fishing at Tanapag under the special exemption. The Council arranged to have the demonstration videotaped as a part of ongoing efforts by both the Council and the CNMI to document success stories in the region where fishing is the well being of the indigenous people. The documentary is being developed by the staff of the Northern Marianas College and is expected to be completed before the end of the year.

Above: As a part of the special exemption permit, CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife staff collects information on the chenchulu fishermen's catch. **Left:** The head boat with the master fisherman watches over the fishermen in the chenchulu as they spear fish. **Below:** Council staff met with the Lizama family on Saipan in March 2008 to discuss their interest in obtaining a special exemption to utlize their chenchulu nets to catch atulai.

The demonstration involved three boats carrying 15 spear fishermen and a small boat carrying the master fisherman, three helpers and the net. Three sets were made in a three-hour period. The activity was monitored by DFW enforcement personnel. At the end of fishing, and in accordance with the special permit conditions, DFW weighed the fish, sorted them by species and measured lengths to get the range of fish sizes. The fishermen caught 175 pounds of fish (half of the allotted harvest), which were distributed to the fishermen.

After the demonstration, the Council met with a group of fishermen from another village who are interested in obtaining a special exemption to utilize their chenchulu to catch atulai.

Guam Community to Reconstruct CHamoru Lunar Calendar

In 2005, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council began working on calendars featuring the traditional lunar months, moon phase names and associated fishing practices for the indigenous communities in Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Experts with traditional knowledge for the Hawaii and Refaluwasch calendars were located. However, because the CHamoru peoples had lost much of their language and practices over the years under Spanish and American governance, finding adequate information for that calendar proved daunting.

While on Guam for the 140th Council meeting in 2008, the Council therefore brought together local cultural experts to discuss the informational gaps in the CHamoru calendar. The participants at the March 15th workshop included Frank Cruz and Leo Leal, University of Guam (UOG) Traditional Seafarer's Society (TSS) and Traditions About Seafaring Islands (TASI); Sylvia Flores, president, Guam Department of Chamorro Affairs; Leonard Irriarte, oral historian, Guma Palu Li'e; Peter Onedera, assistant professor, UOG Chamorro studies; Tony Ramirez, historian, Guam Department of Parks and Recreation; Felix Reyes, marketing officer, Guam Visitors Bureau; Richard Seman, publisher, *Marianas Fishing Magazine*; and Manny Sikau, research assistant, UOG Micronesia Area Research Center. Invitees unable to attend included Dr. Lawrence Cunningham, assistant professor of history, UOG; Ronald Laguana, traditional fisherman and administrator of the Chamorro Language Studies Division, Guam Public School System; Jesse Rosario, traditional fisherman, Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association; and Barry Smith, professor, UOG Marine Laboratory.

The meeting featured presentations by Council staff Sylvia Spalding and Charlie Kaaiai. Manny Sikau presented the Polowat calendar with a focus on its navigational use. Like the Refaluwasch, the Polowat are people from the Caroline Islands who have traded with and inhabited the Mariana Archipelago for centuries. The participants decided to form a CHamoru Lunar Calendar Working Group to research and fill in the calendar's gaps. They selected Peter Onedera as their chair.

The working group held its first meeting at the UOG on April 19, 2008, followed by a meeting with fishermen on May 24, 2008 and two subsequent meetings on June 7 and 21, 2008. The group noted the usefulness of the traditional lunar calendar as an educational tool to enhance and preserve local cultural practices. They targeted Sept. 30, 2008, for completion of the contents for a 2009 calendar. Since the Council was involved in the development of the program, they decided to focus this calendar on the traditional fishing practices associated with the moon phases and to include traditional farming practices in later calendars. To meet the deadline for the 2009 calendar, some members of the group suggested the use of the moon phase names from the Refaluwasch and Polowat as needed until the CHamoru names can be identified. Considering the history shared amongst the Micronesian peoples, the group agreed.

The group also agreed that the lunar calendar should utilize the traditional 13-month cycle, but would include the respective Gregorian calendar dates in fine print for daily reference. Significant dates in CHamoru history will be identified to enhance the educational importance of such cultural information. The calendar will not include fiesta days introduced by the Spanish.

The March 15th CHamoru Lunar Calendar Workshop brought together CHamoru, Native Hawaiian and Polowat cultural experts to discuss reconstruction of the traditional CHamoru lunar calendar.

It was agreed by everyone that the group should remain open to anyone wishing to contribute to the success of the project, including cultural resource practitioners from the CNMI. The act of developing a lunar calendar to demonstrate existing cultural knowledge shows the CHamoru culture is alive, important and advancing.

Congressional Bill Recognizes CNMI Territorial Waters

On July 14, 2008, President George W. Bush lifted an executive order that prohibited offshore drilling. The intent is to increase domestic production of oil and help drive down prices. However, before offshore drilling can begin, Congress must first repeal a law that prohibits oil exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf.

Such a bill has already been sponsored by Rep. Sue Myrick (R-NC) on May 21, 2008, with 95 cosponsors. HR 6108 Deep Ocean Energy Resources Act of 2008 proposes to reduce the price of gasoline by enabling the United States to responsibly explore its own deep ocean to produce American energy. The bill would grant coastal states the authority to keep exploration 100 miles from the coastlines and also allow states to share in the revenues received. The bill has been referred to several committees.

Rep. Don Young (R-AK), the ranking member of the Natural Resources Committee, has added a section to the bill that will also provide, if passed, a valuable asset for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). It would extend submerged land rights for all coastal states and territories to 12 miles, including CNMI. This legislation for the first time would treat all territories as a state and would provide the same benefits for minerals as a coastal state receives.

Currently, the federal government does not recognize any territorial waters for CNMI, not even 0 to 3 miles.

Marine Fisheries Summer Course Expands to Other Islands

Left to right: Hawaii class tours the Honolulu fish auction; CNMI class learns to identify fish from Division of Fish & Wildlife biologists (standing l-r) Mike Tenorio and Mike Triani; Fish prints created

Left to right: American Samoa class learns about weighing fish and boat-based surveying from Terry Lam Yuen, Dept. of Marine & Wildlife Resources; Hawaii class learns about aquaculture from Tom Iwai at the Au
organized as Keiki Fishing Tournament to promote fishery conservation through catch-and-release and to practice analyzing catch data; An

In 2006, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council sponsored a highly successful two-week High School Summer Course on Marine Fisheries and Resources in Hawaii. The students in that course won an award for a short video they produced and some of the students continued on to follow marine studies and undertake marine-related volunteer work with organizations they had been introduced to during the course. Inspired by this tremendous success, the Council offered the course again during the 2008 summer not only in Hawaii but also Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Funding assistance was provided by the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program.

The 2008 courses were designed to provide the students with a wide overview of marine-related jobs in their geographical area and to expand their knowledge of marine fisheries and resources, including management of them. Local resources were emphasized, and each course culminated in a student activity or product to engage the general public. The courses ran from one to three weeks and captivated the students through an array of guest lectures, field trips and hands-on activities.

For their final product the students in American Samoa created a billboard that promotes preservation of coral reefs and sustainable use of marine resources. All the students worked and contributed to the final product, which will be posted near the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources' wharf that is now near completion. The course was run by Vaasa Taamu, head of the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources' Education Division, and her special assistant Maria Vaifanua, with assistance by Council on-site coordinator Fini Aitaoto.

In Guam and CNMI, students produced computerized visual presentations of their respective courses set to music. The students were allowed to work as a team or individually. The finished products will be shown at Guam and CNMI high school science classes so other students are exposed to the dynamic topics, hands-on experience and training from various experts and authorities that were provided by the courses. This activity will also serve to generate student interest in the course next year should it become available again. The Council's on-site coordinators on Guam and CNMI will also be sharing the student productions during upcoming local environmental and other marine events. Extra copies will be distributed to other government regulatory agencies,

awaii class under the instruction of gyotaku fish printing master Naoki Hiyashi; American Samoa class on a boat tour to a fish aggregation device; American Samoa class on an aquaculture field trip

esearch Center; CNMI students learn about safety at sea from Boating Safety Officer Ben Falig; Guam students learn about dangerous marine organisms from Dr. Barry Smith, University of Guam; The Hawaii class amoa students learn about fisheries projects undertaken by the Dept. of Marine & Wildlife Resources from chief biologist Marlowe Sabater

private companies and individuals who assisted with the summer course. These courses were run by Richard Seman, former Secretary of the CNMI Division of Land and Natural Resources and former director of the CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife, with assistance from the Council's on-site coordinators John Calvo and Jack Ogumoro

In Hawaii, the students undertook two activities to engage the public. First, they organized a Keiki Fishing Tournament. They produced and distributed flyers for the event, developed a catch report for the tournament participants, ran the July 6 event, analyzed the catch data and wrote an article on the event for publication in *Hawaii Fishing News*. The event promoted catch and release and was well attended by nearly 30 children and their parents. In addition, the students produced a short video of the course as well as a video advertisement to promote the course. The short video was shown at the National Marine Educators Association annual conference in July 2008 in Savannah, Georgia. The promotional ad will be broadcast at Moanalua High School during the school year to attract other students to the course should it be offered next year. The course was run by Moanalua High School marine science instructor Erron Yoshioka and media instructor Kelly Calistro.

These courses were made possible through the generous donations and volunteer work of numerous people. The list includes, among others, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Services, American Samoa Community College Sea Grant, American Samoa Swimming Association, CNMI Division of Fish & Wildlife, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on Guam, Micronesian Environment, Guam Fisherman's Cooperative, CNMI Bureau of Environmental Health, Northern Mariana College, CNMI Division of Environmental Quality, CNMI Department of Public Safety, University of Guam, American Red Cross, Inarajan Aquaculture, US Coast Guard Auxiliary, Fish Eye Park, Guam Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources, United Fishing Agency, PacMar Inc., Pacific Ocean Producers, NOAA Marine Debris Program, Fresh Island Fish, University of Hawaii, Ewa Beach Limu Project, US Coast Guard, Hawaii Marine Recreational Fisheries Survey, NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources, Honolulu Community College's Marine Education and Training Center, Kai Makana, Naoki Hayashi and Pacific Islands Fisheries Group as well as traditional, subsistence, recreational and commercial fishermen and traditional ahupua`a practitioners.

Congresswoman Bordallo Opens 140th Council Meeting

Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo (2nd left) at the 140th Council Meeting on Guam recognized 12th-grade student Leana Peters, who won the Council's 2007 photo essay contest "Tradision i Tåsen i Kumunidåt Mariånas: Sigun i inatan i mañaina-ta esta guatu gi kannai i manhoben-ta" (Ocean Traditions of the Marianas Community: Thru the Eyes of Our Elders to the Hands of Our Youth). Also pictured are (l-r) Council Chair Sean Martin, Leana's grandfather Juan Benavente (a talaya fishermen featured in Leana's photo essay), Council Executive Director Kitty Simonds and Council Vice Chair Manny Duenas.

The Honorable Madeleine Z. Bordallo, US Congresswoman from Guam, opened the 140th Council meeting on Guam on March 17, 2008. Bordallo chairs the House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans. During her speech, she supported the fishery management council system, noting that "the council concept and system is a unique and proven way with which to carefully manage our fisheries, and to do so in a way that involves the greatest degree of community input and participation as possible."

Bordallo said that the impacts on Guam's fisheries is one of the many facets to be explored as part of the overall military realignment in the region and the rebasing of 8,000 US Marines and their families from Okinawa to Guam. She encouraged the Council "to help in this process of assessing and preparing for impacts on our fisheries and to our fishing community."

Bordallo also addressed IUU [illegal, unregulated and unreported] fishing. "The United States Coast Guard must be given greater resources to help respond to IUU fishing in the waters of the Western Pacific Ocean, and I am committed to working toward this end," she said. "The lack of capability to respond to IUU fishing in the Western Pacific Ocean is only one of many areas in which I believe the federal government should improve upon its record."

She also noted her commitment to building fisheries programs for indigenous communities. "We know that through effort of stakeholders in our communities, the Magnuson-Stevens Act was amended in 1997 to promote traditional fishing knowledge and practices and to support greater participation of indigenous communities in US Pacific island fisheries," she said. "I am concerned with the interruption of funding for an authorized program [the Community Demonstration Project Program for the Western Pacific Region] that was experienced three years ago, and I am working to reinstate funds for its implementation." The program "holds national value for the protection and development of indigenous fishing practices" and "is an important cultural preservation program for the Chamorro [CHamoru] people of Guam and the Northern Marianas, the Samoan community of American Samoa and the greater South Pacific, and Native Hawaiians," she noted. "Our challenge is in securing such understanding on the part of budget decision-makers in Washington, DC."

Guam Earth Day 2008

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council participated in the annual Earth Day celebration on April 26, 2008, at Ypao Beach Park, Guam. The theme for this year's Island Pride event was "HARD CORE! Help Against Reef Damage ...Conserve Our Reef Environment."

Council On-Site Coordinator John Calvo and student volunteers from George Washington High School's Marine Mania Club and Under Water World set up a booth showcasing a mini underwater ecosystem, treasures from the ocean, artifacts, other cultural items, interactive games and a face painting station. The games included "CHamoru Fish Names," "Name the Threat to the Ecosystem" and "Identify the Specimen." At the face painting station, tropical fish, sharks and turtles were in popular demand with kids of all ages.

Council On-Site Coordinator John Calvo explains the CHamoru Fish Name game to two student volunteers from the Marine Mania Club. Photo courtesy of Walter Leon Guerrero, Guam Environmental Protection Agency

Marine Education and Training Program Takes Shape

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council convened a Marine Education and Training Workshop in partnership with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO) on April 15 and 16, 2008, at the Council office in Honolulu. The workshop's goal was to begin developing a marine education and training program as mandated by Section 305 (j) of the 2006 reauthorized Magnuson Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act. The program is to include employment training in specific marine-related fields; fisheries and seafood-related training; outreach programs to educate seafood consumers; methods and technology to improve fisheries data and sustainability practices; utilization of local and traditional knowledge to enhance science-based management of fishery resources; and partnership development.

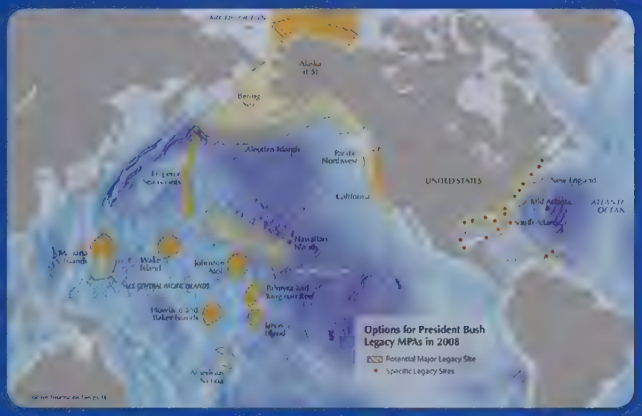
Nearly two dozen experts from American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Guam and Hawaii participated in the workshop. They determined that the program components of Section 305 (j) are being addressed by educational initiatives throughout the region but the educational opportunities are not equitably available to the entire region. They made a series of recommendations on how the program should move forward.

After reviewing these recommendations at its 142nd meeting, June 2008 in Honolulu, the Council directed its staff to work with PIRO and other workshop participants to undertake the following:

- Develop scholarships and travel funding through grants and other funding sources for students to access education and training in Hawaii.
- Develop partnerships with maritime employers for internships, work training and on-the-job training for marine related employment.
- Partner with Alu Like to develop a marine training program for the Western Pacific Region.
- Partner with Alu Like and PacMar to develop a program for regional fisheries and seafood-related training and education.
- Partner with the Hawaii Seafood Council to develop an outreach project for wild caught seafood consumer education throughout the region.
- Partner with an organization to be identified to develop an outreach project for aquaculture seafood consumer education throughout the region.
- Partner with the Northern Marianas College, University of Guam, University of Hawaii, Honolulu Community College, Alu Like and American Samoa Community College on projects and programs to improve recruitment and retention of students in marine technology programs.
- Develop a program with Alu Like to provide information to regional educational institutions on marine related vocational education.
- Develop a community, cultural consultation process throughout the region for the native communities to inform resource managers on the best practices for traditional resource management.
- Draft a report on developing partnerships with agencies, academic institutions and other entities throughout the region.
- Develop a process to review and select marine education and training projects to be funded.

For more information, contact Charles Kaaiai at **charles.kaaiai@noaa.gov** or (808) 522-8227.

Monument Proposals May Impact US Fishing Grounds



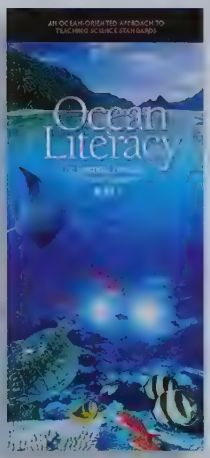
The Pew Environment Group's efforts to expand the marine protected area (MPA) legacy for President George W. Bush extend beyond trying to appropriate one-third of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands as a national marine monument. Included in the presentation that the Pew Group has used to extol the virtues of the proposed Mariana Trench Marine Monument is a slide that shows almost the entire Pacific Basin. Highlighted as potential "legacy MPAs" are the US exclusive economic zone (EEZ) waters around Wake Island, Johnston Atoll, Howland and Baker Island, Jarvis Island, Palmyra Atoll and Kingman Reef, collectively known as the Pacific Remote Island Areas (PRIAs). The presentation also includes the Emperor Seamounts, which do not lie within the EEZ of any nation but are in the high seas beyond national jurisdictions.

The loss of the PRIAs would be felt most keenly by the Hawaii-based longline fishery and the US purse seine fleet operating in the Western and Central Pacific. The EEZ waters around Johnston Island, Palmyra Atoll and Kingman Reef have been important fishing grounds for the Hawaii longline fleet. The fleet fishes up to a thousand miles north or south of Hawaii, and the waters around Palmyra Atoll and Kingman Reef have been important grounds for bigeye tuna.

Similarly, the US EEZ waters around Howland and Baker Islands have contributed significantly to US purse seine catches, particularly during El Nino years when the skipjack moves eastwards as the warmer waters of the Western Pacific flow into the Central Pacific.

If the proposed monuments become reality, they would negatively impact US fisheries in the Western Pacific Region and continue increasing US imports of foreign seafood, which now account for 86 percent of our national seafood supply. Because US fisheries are more strictly regulated and monitored than foreign fisheries and because imported fish create a bigger carbon footprint than domestic fish, on a global scale the monuments would do more harm than good to the environment.

Traditional Knowledge Committee Moves Forward



The Traditional Knowledge Committee is proposing a supplement to the Ocean Literacy's essential principles and fundamental concepts that would recognize traditional viewpoints about the ocean and aquatic resources.

The ad hoc Traditional Knowledge (TK) Committee of the National Marine Educators Association (NMEA) convened for the second time on July 22, 2008, in Savannah, Georgia. The committee is co-chaired by Sylvia Spalding, communications officer for the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, and Don Hudson, president, The Chewonki Foundation. Spalding proposed the creation of the committee based on comments made by Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders during the Ho`ohanohano I Na Kupuna Puwalu and the International Pacific Marine Educators Conference. At these conferences, indigenous practitioners and experts expressed concern about the continuing decline of cultural and natural resources and their interest in trying to reverse this trend by sharing some of their knowledge they have historically kept within family circles.

The TK Committee has subsequently met with Native American communities in association with the NMEA annual conference, which is hosted at different locations in the country each year. In 2007, the committee met with Penobscot Nation in Portland, Maine. In Savannah this year, it met with representatives from the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation, which is located in North Carolina, and from the Gullah and Geechee communities, which are comprised of African slave descendants inhabiting the once isolated Sea Islands off South Carolina and Georgia. All of the persons who have met with the committee to date have expressed interest in moving the committee forward cautiously, given the federal government's historical use of education against Native people as well as appropriation of cultural knowledge by academics.

The TK Committee is scheduled to meet next when NMEA convenes in Monterey, Calif., in June 2009 and then in Tennessee in 2010. It is looking to secure scholarship funds for an indigenous person to attend these conferences. The committee is also proposing a Traditional Knowledge supplement to the Ocean Literacy essential principles and fundamental concepts (www.coexploration.org/ oceanliteracy). These principles and concepts are deemed the information that "an ocean-literate persons understands" and are increasingly promoted as a guide for state science standards and criteria for federal funding of marine education related projects.

Proposal Fails to Meld NEPA and MSA

On May 14, 2008, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a proposed rule in the Federal Register that would create new environmental review procedures for fishery management actions under the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act (MSA). The intent of Congress is that these new procedures would also fulfill the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and thus eliminate unnecessary analytical duplication, coordinate NEPA and MSA public review periods to reduce public confusion, and streamline rulemaking processes so regulatory actions can be implemented in a timely manner.

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council supports such improvements. However, it found little evidence that the proposed rule satisfies the intent of Congress to meld NEPA and MSA public review periods, streamline the rulemaking processes and eliminate unnecessary duplication. The main thrust of the proposed change seems to be a move to have NEPA driving the MSA process. The proposed rule would also designate a new form of documentation, the Integrated Fishery Environmental Management Statement. However, this change appears to be principally a name change from the existing Environmental Impact Statement and its related requirements.

To review the proposed rule, go to **http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-10271.pdf**.

First Winners of Pelagics Spearfishing Contest Announced, More to Come!

CHECK IT OUT – Spear fishing reports are beginning to trickle in as summer heats up. The *Hawaii Skin Diver Magazine* and Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council are sponsoring the 2008 Pacific Islands Pelagic Skindiver Spearfishing Contest, which rewards free-diving blue water spearfishermen in the US Pacific islands who practice safety by diving with a partner and who support resource management by sharing information on their spearfishing catches.

In the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Jay Sternadel of Guam caught a 2.46-pound saba (kawakawa), measuring 16.25 inches, off the southeast side of Saipan during the Marianas APNEA Spearfishing Club's 2nd Annual Spearfishing Tournament on May 17, 2008. For his entry, Jay will receive the monthly raffle drawing for May.

In Hawaii, Kyle Nakamoto submitted a 18.2-pound kawakawa, measuring 30.25 inches long and 10 inches around the girth. Kyle nabbed his tuna using a Riffe 100cm Euro off Punaluu, Oahu, with Kirby Fukunaga as a witness. They were fishing from a boat in about 50 feet of water.

The pelagic spearfishing contest runs through Sept. 30, 2008, so you still have time to log in your catch to be eligible to win great monthly and grand prizes. Check out ***www.wpcouncil.org*** or ***www.hanapaafishing.com*** for more information on the 2008 Pacific Islands Pelagic Skindiver Spearfishing Contest.

Jay Sternadel won a 2008 Pacific Islands Pelagic Skindiver Spearfishing Contest monthly raffle drawing for May with this saba (kawakawa) he speared off the southeast side of Saipan. More monthly and grand prizes are available until the contest ends in September.

Available Resources

The following publications and videos are available from the Council on request. To obtain a copy, please contact the Sylvia Spalding at **Sylvia.spalding@noaa.gov** or go to the Council website at **www.wpcouncil.org**.

Bottomfish. 2nd printing. 2008. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

Green Sea Turtles of the Pacific Islands, 2nd printing. 2008. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

An Integrated Approach to Reducing Mortality of North Pacific Loggerhead Sea Turtles in Baja, California Sur, Mexico. 2005. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

Integrated Management for the Conservation of Protected Species in Longline Fishing. 2005. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

Nesting Beach Conservation: A Community-Based Approach for Sea Turtle Recovery in the Pacific. 2005. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

Working with the Ecuadorian Fishing Community to Reduce the Mortality of Sea Turtles in Longline Fisheries: Year One (March 2004 to March 2005). 2005. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

Catch Fish Not Turtles Using Longlines. 2004. Honolulu: Blue Ocean Institute. [available in English, Spanish, Japanese and Korean]

These traditional lunar calendars may be downloaded at ***www.wpcouncil.org/education***.

American Samoa Lunar Calendar. 2008. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. ISBN 1-934061-21-2

CHamoru Lunar Calendar. 2008. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. ISBN 1-934061-22-0

Hawaiian Lunar Calendar. 2008. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. ISBN 1-934061-23-9

Refaluwasch Lunar Calendar. 2008. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. ISBN 1-934061-24-7

This educational activity may be downloaded at ***www.wpcouncil.org/education***.

Identifying Fish Habitat in Island Ecosystems. 2007. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

Simonds K. et al., editors. 2008. ***Ho`ohanohano I Na Kupuna Puwalu and International Pacific Marine Educators Conference***. Current: The Journal of Marine Education. Vol. 24, No. 2. ISSN 0889-5546.

Steering Committee, Bellagio Sea Turtle Conservation Initiative. 2008. ***Strategic Planning for Long-term Financing of Pacific Leather-back Conservation and Recovery: Proceedings of the Bellagio Sea Turtle Conservation Initiative, Terengganu, Malaysia***; July 2007. WorldFish Center Conference Proceedings 1805, The Worldfish Center, Penang, Malaysia.

Gilman E et al. 2007. ***Strategies to Reduce Shark Depredation and Unwanted Bycatch in Pelagic Longline Fisheries: Industry Practices and Attitudes, and Shark Avoidance Strategies***. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. ISBN 1-934061-06-9

Curran D et al. 2006. ***Recreational Metadata: Using Tournament Data to Describe a Poorly Documented Pelagic Fishery***. Honolulu: Pelagic Fisheries Research Program.

Kinan I. 2006. ***Proceedings of the Second Western Pacific Sea Turtle Cooperative Research and Management Workshop. Vol. 2, North Pacific Loggerhead Sea Turtles***. 2d ed. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. 2006. ISBN 1-934061-01-8

Kinch J. 2006. ***A Socio-economic Assessment of the Huon Coast Leatherback Turtle Nesting Beach Project, Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea***. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. ISBN 1-934061-05-0

National Museum of Natural History. 2006. ***Northwestern Hawaiian Islands: Third Scientific Symposium, Nov. 2-4, 2004***. Atoll Research Bulletin No. 543.

Schultz J et al. ***Pelagic Fishing Tournaments and Clubs in Hawaii***. Honolulu: Pelagic Fisheries Research Program.

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. 2006. ***Hawaii: A Center for Pacific Sea Turtle Research and Conservation***. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. ISBN 1-934061-04-2

Kinan I, ed. 2005. ***Proceedings of the Second Western Pacific Sea Turtle Cooperative Research and Management Workshop. Volume I: West Pacific Leatherback and Southwest Pacific Hawksbill Sea Turtles. May 17-21, 2004***. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. ISBN 1-934061-09-3

Parks N, ed. 2005. ***Proceedings of the Second International Fisheries Forum. Nov. 19-22, 2002***. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. ISBN 1-934061-25-5

Karam A, compiler. 2004. ***Resources Assessment Investigation of the Mariana Archipelago, 1980-1985: Compilation of Published Manuscripts, Reports and Journals***. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. ISBN 1-934061-12-3

It's OK. Enjoy Bottomfish. 2008. Honolulu: NWHI Bottomfishing Hui.

"Fishing in Old Hawaii." 2007-2008. Honolulu: Ben Wong LLC. (This series of 30-second videos may be downloaded at ***www.wpcouncil.org/education***.)

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (producer). ***Leatherback Turtle Conservation in Papua New Guinea***. 2008. Sahah, Malaysia: Scubazoo. DVD. 30-, 10- and 1-minute versions.

Advisory Panel Nominations Open

Do you fish? Do you want to get involved in managing our marine resources? Then we want you! The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council invites fishermen, members of fishery related industries, and other individuals from fishery or marine related organizations to apply for membership on one of the Council's Advisory Panel (AP) sub-panels. Advisors provide advice on all aspects of the region's fisheries and suggest management strategies.

The AP sub-panels include the American Samoa Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP), Hawaii FEP, Marianas FEP and the Pelagics FEP. Applicants will be considered based on the selection criteria listed below:

- Present or recent activity in recreational, commercial or subsistence fishing;
- Present or recent involvement in the buying, processing or marketing sectors of the fishing industry and/or involvement in conservation or management organizations, fishing clubs or other organized groups concerned with marine or fisheries issues;
- Willingness to play an active role in fisheries management; and
- Ability to dedicate time for fishery document review and participate in panel meetings.

Advisory terms are for two years and will commence Jan. 1, 2009. Positions are voluntary (not paid). However, members will be reimbursed for expenses related to their participation in meetings. For additional information or application forms see Council web page **www.wpcouncil.org** or write, email or call the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council at 1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1400, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813; phone (808) 522-8220; fax (808) 522-8226; email **info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov**. Applications must be received before Sept. 15, 2008.

Anatomy of Bureaucracy: FEP Update

It often takes years for recommendations made by Regional Fishery Management Councils to clear the administrative hurdles before they are transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce for approval and become regulations. A case in point is the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's recommendation to move from a species-based management approach through its current Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) to a place-based approach through Fishery Ecosystem Plans (FEPs). The Council took a final vote on this recommendation in December 2005. Council staff has been working the past two and half years with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO) to prepare the recommendation for approval by the Secretary of Commerce. The Council is hopeful that this will occur before the Bush Administration leaves office.

The change provides a means to facilitate an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management—an approach that has been supported since the 1980s by NMFS, the United Nations, the Pew Ocean Commission and numerous others. Under the change, management of insular fisheries (bottomfish, coral reefassociated, crustacean and precious coral) would fall into four FEPs—one each for the archipelagos of American Samoa, Hawaii and the Marianas, including Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and one for the Pacific remote island areas (PRIAs), including the islands and atolls of Howland, Baker, Jarvis, Wake, Johnston, Palmyra and Kingman Reef. The ecosystem-based management of pelagic fisheries would be through a fifth FEP.

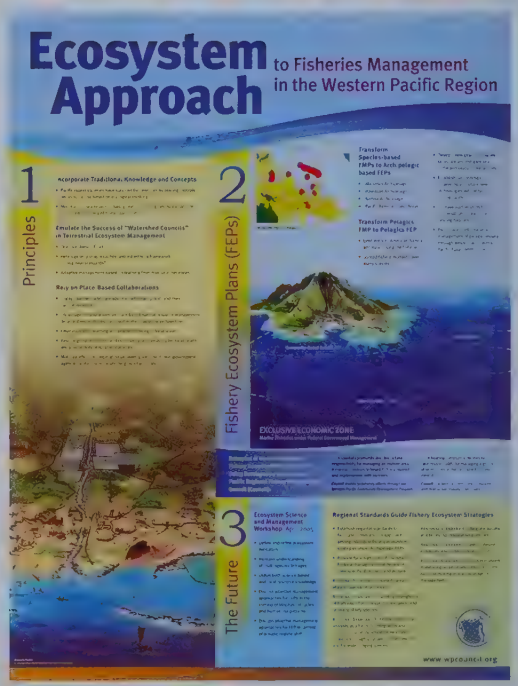
The change to place-based management includes the reorganizing of existing regulations by their specific geographical location (e.g., American Samoa bottomfish regulations would be tied to the American Samoa Archipelago FEP rather than lumped with bottomfish regulations for all the other US Pacific Islands as is the case now).

So what's taking so long? Below are a few of the major steps that have been completed:

- State, territorial and commonwealth agencies and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW) were provided opportunity to comment on the draft FEPs and then an opportunity to review a revised draft that took into account their comments.
- Fishery management regulations for the Western Pacific Region were separated from the regulations for California and the West Coast and placed in their own section of the Code of Federal Regulations.
- At the request of NMFS, Council staff and general counsel have fine-tuned the FEPs and repackaged regulations first as amendments to the existing FMPs and then as new stand-alone management plans, resulting in three or more drafts of each document.

Slowly, the FEPs and associated regulations are getting closer to official transmittal to the Secretary of Commerce. At the time of this writing, a PIRO contractor was working with Council staff on preparing the combined package for Secretarial review.

In addition to completing the process to get the fishery plans and regulations to the Secretary of Commerce for approval (i.e., the process through the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act), Council staff has been working to ensure that the FEP action complies with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Endangered Species Act (ESA). A draft programmatic environmental impact statement (EIS) for the FEPs was completed in March 2007. The final programmatic EIS will be produced following completion of new biological opinions on the FEPs, which are expected to conclude this summer or fall. These biological opinions are needed to ensure that the fisheries remain in compliance with the ESA.



Top: Along with the development of the Fishery Ecosystem Plans was the creation of Regional Advisory Committees (REACs) in the American Samoa, Mariana and Hawaii Archipelagos. The REACs have been meeting the past two years. Pictured are participants of the Hawaii Archipelago Regional Advisory Council meeting, July 2008, in Honolulu.

Above: In 2005 the Committee made final recommendations on the Fishery Ecosystem Plans (FEPs) and presented this poster about the FEPs during the Managing Our Nation's Fisheries II conference in Washington, DC.

ACLs Spur Call for Permits and Reporting for All Federal Fisheries

The 2006 reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act requires annual catch limits (ACLs) for species experiencing overfishing by 2010 and for all other managed fisheries by 2011.

On June 9, 2008, that National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a proposed rule addressing these new requirements, which the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council reviewed at its 142nd meeting in June 2008 in Honolulu. Many comments supported its flexibility. Other comments focused on the lack of information on which to base ACLs for many fisheries, as well as the burden of determining and implementing ACLs for every managed fishery by 2011.

Given the magnitude of this task and the lack of additional resources to achieve it, the Council reiterated its support for a phased approach to ACLs, which would begin with those species already or most at risk to experiencing overfishing. The Council also considered the costs and benefits of allocating ACLs by fishery sector (e.g., commercial vs. non-commercial). It acknowledged that allocation could reduce competition between sectors; however, without complete information on historical or current harvests by all sectors, it would be extremely difficult to devise an allocation system that was fair and transparent. To improve available information the Council recommended that federal permitting and reporting requirements be implemented for all fisheries that are lacking complete catch information.

The proposed rule is available on the Council's website at **www.wpcouncil.org**. NMFS is accepting public comments on it through Sept. 8, 2008.

IYOR 2008
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE REEF

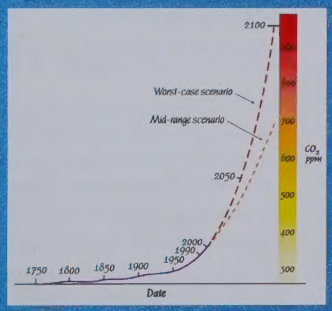
In recognition of the International Year of the Reef, the Council heard a presentation by coral reef expert and Australian Institute for Marine Science's former chief scientist J. E. N. "Charlie" Veron on the impacts of global warming and ocean acidification.

World's Coral Reefs May Go Extinct, Expert Warns

According to J. E. N. "Charlie" Veron, former chief scientist of the Australian Institute of Marine Science, "Coral reefs worldwide are threatened with total extinction this century if urgent action is not taken to reduce anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions."

Veron delivered his presentation to the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, Fishers Forum and joint meeting of the National Marine Educators Association's Oceania chapter and Ocean Literacy Alliance of Hawaii, on June 16 and 17, 2008, in Honolulu. Among the key points made were the following:

- Extensive damage to reefs is currently coming from greenhouse temperature increases causing mass death through "bleaching."
- The ultimate threat will ultimately come from ocean acidification caused by absorption of carbon dioxide by surface waters. Acidification will not only affect coral reefs, it will impact all our oceans and all life in them as marine life will not be able to produce their normal calcium carbonate skeletons.
- These impacts are due to the rate at which greenhouse gases are being produced, which is far exceeding that of any previous time in the history of the Earth.



Current rate of atmospheric CO2 increase (in ppm) from instrumental records of the past and computer model projections of the future. The midrange scenario assumes that most of the remedial actions now being proposed are put into effect within a decade. The worst-case scenario assumes that these remedial actions are not implemented or are ineffective.

Veron predicted that, in a couple of decades, every year will appear to be an El Nino year. He said that El Nino cycles already appear to be becoming more frequent because the oceans are reaching their upper temperature limit more frequently.

"We must buy ourselves time—time for the innovators to do their job, to develop solutions and to create a future that is not dependent on fossil fuel," he concluded. "We, the citizens of the wealthy countries, are capable of achieving 50 percent cuts in greenhouse emissions virtually immediately."

To view the presentation, go to ww.coexploration.org/hawaii. For more information, visit **www.coralreefresearch.org**.

Council Family Announcements

USCG RADM Manson Brown (2nd from left) during his visit to Saipan on July 16, 2008, met with CNMI Council members Ignacio dela Cruz and Ben Sablan (1st and 2nd from right) on board the *Stars and Stripes* owned by Sam Markos (center). RADM Brown was accompanied by Lt. Julie Bethke, USCG Sector Saipan.

RAdm Manson K. Brown took command of the Fourteenth US Coast Guard District on May 22, 2008. He replaces the district's previous commander, **RAdm Sally Brice-O'Hara**, as the USCG representative on the Council. Brown is a native of Washington, DC, and a registered professional civil engineer.

David Itano, research associate at the University of Hawaii Pelagic Fisheries Research Program, joined the Council on Aug. 11, 2008, taking the at-large seat vacated by **Rick Gaffney**. Itano has a wide range of experience in pelagic, coral reef and bottom fisheries having served as fishery biologist for the Territory of American Samoa and research scientist for the tuna research program of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. He has also participated in several commercial and smaller-scale fisheries from Alaska, the Pacific Northwest and throughout the tropical central and western Pacific region. His current research focuses on how the biology and movement of tuna and billfish relates to fisheries and their sustainable management.

Karl Brookins, program manager for commercial fisheries and resources enhancement, Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources, has been appointed chair of the Council's Coral Reef Ecosystem Plan Team. He replaces **Jeff Walters**, who has stepped down from the Plan Team. Brookins is the former, chief of the American Samoa Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Division and a former member of the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee.

National Saltwater Angler Registry to Start in 2009

In June 2008, the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Registry Team published a Proposed Rule in the Federal Register to implement a National Saltwater Angler Registry. The Registry's goal is to improve recreational fishing data collection by creating a universe of recreational saltwater fishermen from which NOAA Fisheries can collect catch and effort information. Better information leads to more informed management decisions and continued fishing opportunities.

According to the Proposed Rule, saltwater hook and line fishers, spear fishers, and for-hire (charter) vessels fishing in Federal waters not licensed or registered by an exempted state must enroll in the Registry beginning Jan. 1, 2009. Fishermen would be required to go online or call a toll-free number in order to obtain a registry number that would need to be presented, upon request, to any enforcement officer. There will be no fee for registering until 2011, at which time the cost could be between $15 and $25 annually. States that have a state marine fishing license program or that participate in a regional angler survey are exempt from the registry.

Currently no state, commonwealth or territory in the Western Pacific Region has a marine fishing license requirement for non-commercial fishermen. In Hawaii, charter vessels are considered commercial and are required to have a Commercial Marine License. The State of Hawaii would need to apply for an exemption for this sector.

The Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service are working with local government agencies to develop and modify surveys that could be used by Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa and CNMI to apply for an exemption to the registry. Participation in these surveys would be voluntary and the information collected would be kept confidential.

For more information on MRIP and the National Saltwater Angler Registry, visit **www.wpcouncil.org** or contact the Council's Recreational Fisheries Coordinator, Joshua DeMello, at (808) 522-8220.

In Memory: Bill Strickland

William (Bill) Strickland, a Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) bottomfish fisherman and former member of the Council's Bottomfish Advisory Panel, passed away July 15, 2008. Bill learned his trade from renowned old timers Blackie and Charley Yamamoto, both excellent and well respected bottomfish fishermen who knew how to catch onaga (red fish).

Bill fished in the NWHI for 35 years and was considered a highliner in the fishery. He passed on his knowledge to other fishermen, such as Guy Ohara, who is now the owner/operator of the the NWHI-permitted F/V *Kaimi Kai,* and Bobby Gomez, who is now the owner/operator of the NWHI-permitted F/V *Kamohoalii.* Like Guy, quite a few other NWHI fishermen crewed for Bill over the years, learning the finer points of bottomfishing. Bill was constantly trying to improve on his "rock" anchor design (a type of grappling hook). His latest version had replaceable arms.

While originally from the mainland, Bill followed local tradition religiously. Every New Year he displayed pine and bamboo branches on his vessel, had a local priest bless his vessel and gave away red bottomfish for good luck. He sometimes even took his friends on a local bottomfish trip to the "Banks" just to catch and give away prized onaga for New Year's celebrations.

One of his first positions in Hawaii was as the skipper and crew on Roy Yee's 21-foot troller *Traci Lynn.* The vessel was outfitted with almost every piece of electronic gear available for a small boat. Roy recalls that at that time in his life electronics was foreign to Bill but he forced himself to learn and caught lots of fish.

Bill ran several other boats including *J Natsuko O* until finally acquiring the 42-foot F/V *Fortuna*, one of eight active vessels permitted to continue fishing in the NWHI after it was declared a national marine monument in 2006. Anticipating the end of the NWHI bottomfish fishery in 2011 by presidential declaration, Bill recently began outfitting the *Fortuna* for tuna longlining.

Bill lived a full life, was well liked by his fellow fishermen and generously shared his fish with friends, those who helped him and those in need.

More Funding, Not More Bureaucracy Is Needed

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) was created with the inception of NOAA in 1970. Six years later, the Regional Fishery Management Councils were created by Congress through the Fisheries Conservation and Management Act (reauthorized as the Magnuson Act and the Magnuson-Stevens Act). In 1977, a total of $2.5 million was appropriated for the eight Councils combined.

Through the years, the responsibilities of both NMFS and the Councils have increased to include not only sustainable fisheries but also issues dealing with the larger marine ecosystem, such as protected species and habitat. NMFS and the Councils have also had increases in funding. However, the increase for NMFS has dwarfed that of the eight Regional Fishery Management Councils combined. For example, the NMFS budget in the decade from 1996 to 2006 jumped nearly 200 percent from about $300 million to $800 million, while the Regional Fishery Management Councils' combined budget during this period rose less than 50 percent from about $10 million to less than $15 million.

Today, some entities are lobbying for legislation to create a new level of federal bureaucracy to coordinate agencies involved in ocean issues. The Regional Fishery Management Councils are already structured to provide this level of coordination with federal and state agencies, and they are increasing this coordination in their ongoing progress toward ecosystem-based management. More funding for the Councils can more effectively lead to improvements to our ocean environment than the creation of a new level of bureaucracy.

Gorilla Ogo Cake

This recipe courtesy of Dr. Isabella Aiona Abbott

In a blender bowl, cream well:
1 ¼ cups salad oil (Canola)
2 cups white sugar
2 eggs

Add:
2 cups grated carrots (chopped fresh) or crushed pineapple
1 cup washed, scrubbed and finely chopped gorilla ogo
Mix together and stir into blender

bowl mixture:
2 ½ cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon

Add 1 cup chopped nuts (walnuts) and stir briefly. Grease loaf pan (13 x 9 x 2 inches) with butter and dust lightly with four. Pour blender bowl mixture into loaf pan. Bake 45 to 50 minutes at 300° to 325° F. Test with toothpick, which should come out clean when done. Cool loaf and slice. Gorilla ogo improves the texture of the batter and extends the shelf life of the cake.

Gorilla ogo (Gracilaria salicornia) is an invasive alien seaweed species from the Philippines that is threatening both coral and native seaweed of cultural and subsistence importance to Hawaiians. The seaweed was intentionally released in waters off Oahu and Molokai in the 1970s by researchers who erroneously believed that it would be a good source of agar, a seaweed extract used as a solidifying agent in everything from ice cream to eye cream. In 2004, it reportedly made up 11 percent to 60 percent of the bottom cover of Oahu's south shore.

Richard Shiroma Award Nominations Open

The Council is accepting nominations for the second biannual Richard Shiroma Award. This award is presented to a person for his or her exemplary dedication and performance as a member of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council or one of its advisory groups. The award is in recognition to the service that the late Richard Shiroma dedicated to the Council as chair of its Recreational Data Task Force and vice chair of its Advisory Panel.

Please address nominations to the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, 1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96816; fax (808) 522-8226; or email info to **wpcouncil@noaa.gov**. Please include your name and contact information, the name of the person being nominated, his or her contact information, and an explanation of the outstanding service this person has performed on behalf of the Council. Nominations must be postmarked, emailed or faxed by Sept. 15, 2008.

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Telephone: (808) 522-8220
Fax: (808) 522-8226
info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov
www.wpcouncil.org

CHAIR
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Council Calendar & Announcements 2008

AUGUST

11-22 4th Regular Session,Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's Scientific Committee, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

23-24 Guam International Fishing Tournament, Guam

24-30 US Coral Reef Task Force meeting and events, Kona, Hawaii

SEPTEMBER

4-12 Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme 19th annual meeting, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

9-11 4th Regular Session, Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, Northern Committee, Tokyo

17-19 Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, US advisory committee, Honolulu (tentative)

OCTOBER

2-7 Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, Technical and Compliance Committee, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

8-10 Scientific and Statistical Committee, Council office, Honolulu

12 Hawaii Fishing and Seafood Festival, Honolulu

13 Social Science Research Planning Committee, Honolulu

14-17 143rd Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council meeting, Honolulu

17-19 International Pacific Marine Educators Network conference, Townsville, Australia

23-Nov. 2 North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) 17th annual meeting, Dalian, People's Republic of China

NOVEMBER

12-14 National Scientific and Statistical Committee Workshop, Honolulu

12-14 Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee, New Orleans

18-19 NOAA Pacific Mapping Workshop, Honolulu

DECEMBER

1-5 4th International Deep Sea Coral Symposium, Wellington, NZ

2-4 Hawaii Monk Seal Recovery Team, Honolulu

8-12 Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, Busan, Republic of Korea

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Bridging Communities and Government Workshop

This workshop on Aug. 24, 2008, hosted by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council is one of several workshops preceding the US Coral Reef Task Force meeting at the Keauhou Beach Resort, Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. The overarching goal of the workshop is to provide a forum for community groups from throughout Hawaii and other US Pacific islands to share with government and non-government organizations their initiatives, strategies and techniques for enhancing conservation and management of natural and cultural resources in the marine environment. The workshop will include facilitated question and answer periods. For more information, contact Jarad Makaiau at **jarad.makaiau@noaa.gov** or (808) 522-8220.

International Pacific Marine Educators Network (IPMEN) Conference

Townsville, Australia, Oct.17-19, 2008. IPMEN 2008 aims to attract approximately 100 marine educators (including formal, informal and community-based educators) from at least 20 Pacific countries to share resources and to strengthen the Network aimed at ensuring the health of the Pacific Ocean and the communities who depend upon it. IPMEN works to facilitate real action in marine education and highlight the need for ocean stewardship across the Pacific. For more information, contact Harry Breidhal at **nautilused@optusnet.com.au** or Sylvia Spalding at **Sylvia.spalding@noaa.gov.**

2008 PACIFIC ISLANDS PELAGIC SKINDIVER SPEARFISHING CONTEST

The **Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council** and **Hawaii Skin Diver Magazine** are pleased to announce the "2008 Pacific Islands Pelagic Skindiver Spearfishing Contest," which rewards free-diving blue water spearfishermen in the US Pacific islands who practice safety by diving with a partner and who support resource management by sharing information of their spearfishing catches.

Visit www.wpcouncil.org or www.hawaiiskindiver.com for a list of monthly raffle winners and daily status of fish landings.

Eligibility is limited to

- Billfish (any species of marlin, swordfish or sailfish), tuna (bigeye and yellowfin ahi, aku, or kawakawa), mahimahi and ono (wahoo)
- Caught by free-diving spearfishing in waters around American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) between 8 a.m., May 1, 2008, and 4 p.m., Sept. 30, 2008 (local time);
- Weighed and recorded at specified weighing locations (see www.wpcouncil.org or www.hawaiiskindiver.com); and
- Reported to one of the following within 48 hours of landing:

-Hawaii Skin Diver at info@hawaiiskindiver.net
-Fini Aitaoto (In American Samoa) 633-5892 or 633-5102
-John Calvo (on Guam) 649-3150 or 688-6400
-Jack Ogumoro (In CNMI) 322-9830 or 287-9482

Information that must be reported includes:

- Your name and contact information (mailing address, phone number, email)
- Name of witness(es) to the catch (can be dive partner) and dive partner(s) name
- Species, fork length and weight of fish
- Catch location (island and coastline), date and time
- Whether spearfishing from a boat or from shore
- Speargun brand or type
- A photo of you with fish & dive partner (for potential use in Council or Hawaii Skin Diver publications)

Other (optional) details on how fish was caught will also be welcomed, such as whether fishing around a FAD, tide condition, moon phase, use of chum, etc.

Fish caught using SCUBA, hookah or any other underwater breathing apparatus or by a NOAA employee or contractor are not eligible.

PRIZES:

- Prizes will be awarded to the top three finishers in each island area in the following categories: (1) Largest Fish; and (2) Total Weight of eligible fish accumulated by a diver during the contest period (24 prizes in all).
- Additionally, each eligible fish entitles the spearfisherman with an entry into a bi-monthly raffle. Drawings will be announced on the 15th and 30th of each month (10 prizes in all).